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No Condemnation to them that are in
CHRIST JESUS.

THREE
SERMONS,
ON
ROMANS viii. 1.

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To the Honorable the Senate of the United States

THE

REPORT



OF THE

COMMISSIONERS OF THE LAND OFFICE

IN RESPONSE TO A RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE

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S E R M O N

I.

R O M A N S viii. i.

THERE IS THEREFORE NOW NO CONDEMNATION TO
THEM WHICH ARE IN CHRIST JESUS—

THIS Chapter contains a magazine of christian privileges, and a summary of christian duty. Christians cannot wish to be more holy, than to be, and to do, what is here enjoined ; nor more happy, than to possess what is here promised. For sublimity of matter, for variety of evangelical truth, for admirable support and comfort to believers, this chapter is not inferior to any part of holy writ. Here the law's inability to justify and save, the incarnation and satisfaction of our glorious Redeemer, the Spirit's agency in delivering from the dominion of sin, the believer's union with Christ and freedom from condemnation, are clearly set forth. There is a vein of heavenly comfort running through the whole of it. With this it begins, and with this it ends; it begins with no condemnation to believers ; it ends with no separation from the love of God.

This chapter may be divided into three parts. The first contains powerful support for such as groan under the burden of indwelling sin. The second contains consolation under sufferings. The third, describes the christian's victory and triumph over all his enemies.

After the sad conflict, the apostle had been describing in the preceding chapter, which he had, and all believers have, while here, in this chapter he asserts a most comfortable truth, and thereby removes a great scruple which might trouble the people of God, who found themselves almost overwhelmed by corruption. They might be ready to say, alas! what shall become of us, seeing we are thus beset by corruption? doth not every sin deserve God's wrath and curse, and render us obnoxious to condemnation? how then shall we escape this dreadful curse? To these questions, the apostle answers; that, although corruption was strong in them, daily molesting them, as it did him, (who was an eminent and experienced christian,) yet they were safe enough from condemnation, for the condemnatory sentence of the law shall not pass against any who are in Christ Jesus. *There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ.* This consolatory truth he inferreth by way of conclusion, natively arising from what he had laid down in the preceding chapter, viz. that Christ would deliver him from the body of death. There he gets his eye on Christ as one at hand to deliver him. And seeing that corruption should not wholly overwhelm him through Christ, so neither should this evil thing bring down the
 wrath

wrath of God upon him; Christ would deliver him from the one as well as from the other. And although he might have inferred this comfortable conclusion, for his own particular benefit and advantage, yet he makes use of it more generally for the comfort of all believers, seeing what is essential to believers as such, belongs to every believer in particular.

There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus. In which words we may notice the few following things:

I. An unspeakable privilege asserted, namely, freedom from condemnation, *there is therefore now no condemnation.* These are, indeed, precious words. How fully and convincingly doth the apostle speak to the point in hand? what a solid foundation doth he here lay down for faith to build upon? Is the gracious soul burdened under the remainder of sin, what could be spoken more proper for its relief, than to assure it, that although there may be much corruption, yet there is no condemnation,—no condemnation to them who are in Christ? what a faith strengthening and heart cheering consideration is this? Here are cordials at the very first. No sooner doth the apostle set out, but immediately he is in the great depths of the Grace of God, and happiness of believers. It is very observable how the case is now altered with the apostle. If we view him in the preceding chapter, we will find him disconsolate and cast down under a sense of sin, making many dolorous complaints about himself, that he was “carnal, sold under sin,” and “that in his flesh dwelt no good thing,”

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that “ the good he would, he did not, and the evil that he would not, that he did.” Many such heavy indictments he there draws up against himself; but if we follow him to this chapter we find him quite another man. He changes his note and now triumphs over sin and all his enemies. From the depth of sorrow he is now got up to the pinnacle of true joy. The eye that was just now fixed upon his own vileness, is now fixed upon his great blessedness through Christ: After the dark night the day dawns. When the true penitent has been most abased and cast down, then comes lifting up; a reaping in joy comes after a sowing in tears. The Lord will heal whom he thus wounds, for “ *he healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds.*” Psal. cxlvii. 3.

II. In the words we have the subjects of this privilege, namely, such as are in Christ Jesus; these, and these only, are the persons to whom this great and unspeakable privilege belongs: and they are here described, first, by their union with Christ in reference to their state, they are such as “ are in Christ Jesus;” and secondly, by their qualification and property, in reference to their conduct, as in the subsequent words,—*they walk not after the flesh but after the spirit.*” This clause doth immediately refer to the persons who are in Christ, and is properly descriptive of them.

III. In the words we have the particle *now*. Interpreters differ in their sentiments about it. Some will have it, to have a reference to the present life, and so the meaning is this.—That believers are now secure against condemnation, not only when they shall be actually instated

in the heavenly blessedness, but even here while they are in the way to that blessedness, even though there is sin remaining in them.—

“ *Now* there is no condemnation to them.”

Others apply it to the time of the gospel, *now*, that is, say they, when Christ is come, and when the gospel dispensation has taken place, and gospel grace is advanced,—“ *now* there is no condemnation.” But this sense must be understood with some limitation, or else it may be the occasion of a dangerous error. What? is there no condemnation in the time of the gospel? Yes, surely there is; yea, the sorest condemnation;—no condemnation like to gospel condemnation. It is double condemnation. It will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for the despisers of the gospel, and those who reject Christ.—Hence, says the apostle, “ *how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?*” Heb. ii. 3.

Again, was there no exemption from condemnation till the time of the gospel? Doth the apostle, by this particle, limit this privilege to those only who lived under the gospel? God forbid. Believers under the Old Testament dispensation, were justified and saved as well as believers under the gospel. But the most of commentators are of opinion that this *now* is a casual particle, and is as much as to say,—Since these things are so, that the apostle hath been discoursing about in the preceding chapter, there is now no condemnation. It is the very foundation upon which all is built. The *therefore*, in the text, points to this *now*, and derives all its strength from it.

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The words themselves are a complete proposition, viz. That "there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus."

In discoursing on this subject, we shall, through divine assistance, in the first place, make a few preliminary observations.

Secondly,—Describe the nature of the privilege here asserted, viz. *freedom from condemnation.*

Thirdly.—Inquire what it is to be in Christ Jesus; or, shew how persons may be said to be in Christ Jesus. And,

Fourthly,—Make some practical improvement of the subject.

The first thing in the method was to make a few preliminary observations.

1. Then we observe, that the apostle doth not say, there is no affliction, or no correction to them who are in Christ, but there is "no condemnation to them." It is one thing to be afflicted, and another thing to be condemned: the Lord may and will afflict his people, but he will never condemn them. Indeed the Lord afflicts them here, that he may not condemn them hereafter.

1 Cor. xi. 32. "*But when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.*" The Lord is so gracious that he will not condemn his people, and yet so wise, holy and faithful, that he will afflict them: our interest in Christ secures us from eternal, though not from temporal evils. God cannot condemn, and yet love; but he can chasten and yet love; nay, because he loves he chastens "*As many as I love I rebuke and chasten.*" "*Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth*

eth every son whom he receiveth. You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore will I punish you, because of your iniquities."

Amos iii. 2. God may pardon and yet chastise. Temporal punishment is very consistent with pardoning mercy. Psal. xcix. 8. "*Thou answeredst them, O Lord our God; thou was a God that forgavest them, though thou tookest vengeance of their inventions.*" The Lord had put away David's sin, yet he shall smart for it. His soul shall live; but his child shall die as a chastisement for his sin. 2 Sam. xii. 13. So that the Lord may and will correct his people for the sins and provocations they are chargeable with against him, but he never will condemn them.

2. We observe, that the apostle doth not say, There is no *matter* of condemnation in them who are in Christ. He only says, "there is no condemnation to such." There is a vast difference between what is deserved, and what is actually inflicted. Even the very best of the Lord's people have enough in them that deserves eternal condemnation; and if the Lord should proceed against them according to their deserving, it would be condemnation over and over. Wherever sin is, there is matter of condemnation; and thus it is with the most holy men in the present life. "*There is no man that liveth and sinneth not, in many things we offend all,*" says the apostle James. "*If we say, we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us,*" says the apostle John. Besides the sins which break forth in external acts, of which the best are more or less guilty, there is in all men a depraved nature, which appears in their sinful propensities.

penalties. Now is there not matter of condemnation in these, if the Lord should enter into judgment, and proceed according to the rigour of his justice, and the purity of his law? Surely there is. These evil thoughts and sinful desires, with which the best of men are distressed are not mere infirmities attending this present state of imperfection; but are real iniquities. This the apostle declares, Rom. vii. 7. *“What shall we say then, is the law sin? nay, I had not known sin, but by the law; for I had not known lust, except the law had said, thou shalt not covet.”*

3. We observe, that it is God's condemnation only from which such as are in Christ Jesus are exempted. The universal negative *“no condemnation,”* reaches no further than the condemnatory sentence of the great God. As to this, all who are in Christ are safe. But there are other condemnations to which they are exposed. Men condemn them. We mean the wicked, who are (and always have been) condemners of the righteous. The saints as assessors with Christ, shall judge the world hereafter; and the world will be judging the saints here. Saints condemn sinners by their holy conversation; as it is said of Noah, he prepared an ark, by which he condemned the world. On the other hand, what is more common than for the people of God to have their persons and strict walking condemned by a wicked and malicious world? Their character is,—they are hypocrites, factious, seditious, proud, selfish, and what not. Sometimes their condemnation of them, rises so high as to the taking away of their very lives, as
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in James v. 6. "*Ye have condemned and killed the just.*" But the Lord will not condemn his own people, neither here nor hereafter. All this is but man's judgment. The righteous God judgeth otherwise of his people. He is so far from condemning them, that he will openly vindicate them from all the groundless accusations and condemnations of their enemies. It was David's prayer to God,—"*Lord let my sentence come forth from thy presence.*" As if he had said, Lord, man doth pass sentence upon me, but do thou thyself pass sentence upon me, and then I am sure it will be as just as the sentence of my enemies will be unjust; and do not conceal thy sentence concerning me; but let it "*come forth from thy presence;*" that the world may see and know what I am, and what are thy thoughts concerning me. We have a very comfortable promise to this purpose in Ps. xxxvii. 32, 33. "*The wicked watcheth the righteous and seeketh to slay him. The Lord will not leave him in his hand, nor condemn him when he is judged;*" that is, although man condemn, yet God will not. He will not suffer his own people always to lie under the world's condemnation. No; he will clear up their innocence, "*as the light of the noon day.*" Conscience sometimes also condemns those who are in Christ. One part of the office of conscience is, to act as a judge in the soul; and therefore it will be passing sentence, with respect to men's state and actions; and its sentence is often in a condemnatory way. So it is even with the Lord's own people upon the commission of sin. How forward is conscience to condemn them! and indeed,

indeed, my brethren, a condemning conscience is a very dreadful thing to all that suffer under it, whether they be saints or sinners. There is no pain in the body comparable to the torment of a condemning conscience. A man had better be condemned by all the world, than by his own conscience. “ *The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear ?* ” Well, but the people of God may comfort themselves with this, that tho’ conscience sometimes condemn below, and tho’ God sometimes disapprove, yet he doth not condemn. But to the graceless sinner, it is both conscience condemning, and God condemning, and that is the very height of misery.

Again, Satan, the accuser of the brethren (as he is called) will likewise be condemning the people of God. He is a proud usurper, and loves to be upon the bench, and to assume the power and authority which doth not belong to him : he takes great pleasure in judging the spiritual and eternal state of believers. He who is only God’s executioner, will take upon him to be a judge. And as his pride puts him upon judging, so his malice puts him upon condemning. There is not a righteous person in the world, upon whom, he either doth, or would, pronounce a black sentence of condemnation. He is condemned himself, and he is altogether set upon condemning others, especially when he meets with a poor troubled believer in Christ Jesus, how does he bestir himself in order to discourage and overwhelm that soul ? As if he should say, art thou a child of God ? no ; thou art a child of wrath. What ? art thou looking for salvation ?

salvation? It is in vain to expect it; for hell and destruction shall be thy portion for ever. What, dost thou pretend to grace? There is no true grace in thee. Thou art an hypocrite, a castaway,—one that must perish for ever. Thus you see how the great adversary of our salvation proceeds, when he meets with a poor afflicted and disconsolate soul.

4. We observe, that although it is rendered in our translation *no* condemnation, yet in the original it may be read not *one* condemnation. Such is the grace of God to believers, and such is their safety in their justified state, that there is no condemnation, not so much as *one* condemnation to be passed against them. Jer. l. 20. *“ In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the iniquity of Israel shall be sought for, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall not be found: for I will pardon them whom I reserve,”* These words may have an allusion to a merchant who turns over all his bonds, and searches into all his debt-books, to see if he can find one debt due to him, from such or such a person, but upon the most narrow scrutiny, he cannot so much as find one. Just so it is with the justified person. The Lord might find enough of guilt in him, as he is in himself, but in Christ he is justified; so there is nothing to be found against him. This tends greatly to the comfort and encouragement of the Lord's people. This makes the text highly consolatory. There is not so much as one condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.

5. We observe that the apostle speaks indefinitely with respect to the subject. “ There is

is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." The apostle doth not confine or limit this freedom from condemnation to himself. He doth not say there is no condemnation to me ; but extends it to all who have an interest in Christ : and herein he evidenceth great wisdom, for had he spoken in the singular number (to me) many poor, weak christians, might have been afraid to have applied this great and unspeakable privilege to themselves. They might have been ready to object and say, ah, happy Paul ! thou art strong in faith, eminent in grace, therefore thou mayest well say, there is no condemnation to thee ; but it is not so with us, we are but low shrubs, mere dwarfs in grace ; it is not for us to lay hold upon such an inestimable blessing. Now, in order to obviate this objection, the apostle says, I tell you there is no condemnation to any who are in Christ, let them be who they will. This privilege belongs to all such, to you as well as to me. True it is, I am an apostle, you are not so ; but then I am a believer, and so are you ; I may have more grace than you, but yet you are in Christ as well as I, and the union being common, the salvation is common too. Besides, it is the same righteousness "to all, and upon all that believe." It is the same kind of faith in the highest, as in the lowest believer, to them who have obtained like precious faith with us. It is the same head and the same union with this head in all, and therefore it must be the same freedom from condemnation.

These things being briefly observed, we now proceed to the

2d General head in the method, which was to describe the nature of the privilege expressed in the text, viz. freedom from condemnation, "there is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus.

The word condemnation, hath various significations in scripture.

1. It sometimes signifies that which aggravates ones sin, or punishment, or that which is the ground, or cause of condemnation, as in John iii. 19. "*And this is the condemnation that light is come into the world, and men loved darknes rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*"

2. It is sometimes taken for the punishment itself to which one is adjudged, or condemned; as in 1 Cor. xi. 32. "But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord that we should not be condemned with the world."

3. It is sometimes taken for a censuring of other men's persons, purposes, and actions, either rashly, unjustly, or uncharitably; as in Luke vi. 37. "*Judge not, and ye shall not be judged. Condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.*"

4. It is sometimes taken for a witnessing against, and convincing persons of their wickedness and faults, by the good example, and conduct of others; thus, the Ninevites shall condemn the obstinate Jews, Mat. xii. 41. "*The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonas, and behold a greater than Jonas is here.*"

5. And lastly, the word condemnation, strictly and properly taken, signifies judgment against

against one. It is a forensic word, relating to what is in use among men in courts of justice. To condemn, is the sentence of a judge pronouncing a punishment, or penalty to be inflicted upon the guilty person. Among men, the malefactor, or guilty person, is indicted, and his offence is proved, before the judge pass sentence against him, or declare him guilty of that which is laid to his charge; and therefore he must undergo the penalty that is denounced; if it be capital, he must die for it: so it is here; the impenitent, unbelieving sinner, is indicted at the bar of the great judge of the quick and dead, and he is found guilty of the violation of the holy law; and contempt of the glorious gospel, whereupon the Lord pronounces him to be guilty; and upon that guilt, adjudges him to everlasting death.— This is God's condemning or condemnation, in allusion to that condemnation, which is among men. Again, condemnation is either in respect of guilt or punishment; both of these are included in it. God condemns the sinner, how? why?

1. He judges him to be guilty of that which the law charges against him, for the law saith, thus and thus, sinner, thou hast offended, such duties have been omitted by thee, and such sins have been committed, such sabbaths have been profaned, such mercies have been abused, and such offers of life and salvation have been slighted by thee. Well then, saith God to the sinner, what dost thou say to this charge that is brought in against thee by my holy law? Is it true or false? Canst thou deny it? What excuse canst thou make for thyself?

Alas!

Alas ! the sinner remains speechless. He hath not a word to say in his own defence. He can neither deny what is laid against him, nor excuse himself for what he hath done. Why then, saith God, the righteous judge, unto the sinner, I must pronounce thee to be guilty. And is this all ? No ; for upon this guilt, the law pleads upon another sentence, viz. for the inflicting of the penalty threatened by God himself, and incurred by the sinner : Ah ! then, says God, I must be just, and therefore, sinner, I here adjudge thee to die eternally. This is condemnation in the extensive notion of it. If we consider it with respect to guilt, it is opposed to justification ; and if we consider with respect to punishment, it is opposed to salvation, according to the first sense, we have it in Rom. v. 16, 18.

And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift, for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification of life. Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation ; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life ; and according to the second sense, we have it in Mark xvi. 16.

“ He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned.” These are the two things which make up the condemnation in my text, guilt and death ; from both which believers in Christ are secured. They shall neither be judged guilty, nor shall a sentence of eternal death be passed against them ; their guilt being taken away by their great surety, so that the believer is entirely freed from condemnation.

Again, there is the sentence of condemnation, and the state of condemnation; the former hath a reference to God, and the latter a reference to the sinner, and is consequential upon the former; we have already spoken a little concerning the sentence of condemnation. The state of condemnation is the sinner's enduring the sentence of vindictive justice, and that for ever. Now neither of these can belong to them that are in Christ Jesus, not the former, for they are justified, nor the latter, for in due time they shall be glorified; for whom he justifies, them he also glorifies. We may take in both, yet it is mainly freedom from a state of condemnation, that the apostle had in his eye, when he here said, "there is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus."

Justification and non-condemnation, with respect to the sentence, are both one; only the one denotes what is positive, and the other what is negative. Now the apostle having inferred no condemnation from justification; it appears that he had something in his eye distinct from and consequential upon justification, and that must be freedom from a state of condemnation. "There is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." As if the apostle had said, such shall not be condemned hereafter, nor lie under that punishment in hell, which will be the portion of all unbelievers. "*The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget to seek God.*"

Indeed the negation in the text is so absolute and express, that there cannot be the least doubt of the truth and reality of it, yet as to the application of it unto a person's self, there may be
many

many doubts arising in his mind. But as to the thing itself, there is nothing more certain; we have it not only asserted in this text, but also in many other places of holy writ, as in John iii. 18. "*He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God.*" John v. 24. "*Verily verily I say unto you,*"—(our Lord would have believers fully convinced of this most precious truth, and therefore presseth it with asseveration upon asseveration, and gives his own authority for it,)—" *he that heareth my word and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.* If we look narrowly into the text we will find a double argument for the non-condemnation of believers; the first lies couched under the illative particle *therefore*. "*There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.*" Expositors differ as to the meaning of this particle. Some will have it to have a reference to that which went before, from the 15th verse of the 1st chapter, and to be a conclusion drawn from all that had been taught before, Others limit it to some special part of the apostle's foregoing discourse in this epistle, and to apply it to what he had laid down in the 3d, 4th, and 5th chapters, where he insists upon justification; and having proved at large, that believers are justified through the imputation of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, received by a faith of divine operation, and from this their blessed state; he here infers that there is no condemnation to them. Others make the principal

head in the reference to lie in the 7th chapter, especially in the close of it. The apostle there thanks God who had delivered him from this body of sin through Christ. He saith, with his mind (that is, his renewed part) he served the law of God; and with the flesh (that is, the unregenerated part) he served the law of sin. From this he draws the conclusion, that, "there is now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus."

Again, the non-condemnation of such as are in Christ Jesus may be proved, from their justification and sanctification.

1st. From their justification. The person who is justified cannot be condemned, for justification and condemnation are contrary to each other; there being in justification an acquittal from guilt. How can this consist with the condemning of one as guilty, or because guilty? This would be a plain contradiction. It is with law contraries as with physical ones. Upon the supposition of the one there must needs be the exclusion or negation of the other. Now justification and condemnation are contrary to each other.—The apostle argues upon this in the 33d verse of this chapter, "who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? Surely there must be charging before there can be condemning. Now there can be none of this to the true believer, because, "it is God that justifieth." The believer being justified by God, is freed from condemnation. He that will not acquit the guilty, will not condemn the righteous; for both *"are an abomination to the Lord."* Prov. xvii. 15. Now the justified person is a righteous person

and will the righteous judge condemn a righteous person? Surely not.

But in order to the better understanding of this, let us cast our eyes back into the same epistle, and see what the apostle there lays down concerning justification. He saith, and this is the main position on which he doth enlarge in all the following discourse: *Herein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith,*" chap. i. 17. "*Even the righteousness of God which is by faith in Christ Jesus unto all, and upon all them that believe.*" And in chap. iii. 24, 25. "*Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ: whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, thro' faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; therefore being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*" Now if these scriptures are duly considered concerning justification, we will find that the apostle had just ground to infer, that "there is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus."

2. The non-condemnation of those who are in Christ may be proved from their sanctification. Such as are in Christ are sanctified; for, where ever there is union with the Son, there is sanctification by the spirit; now such as are sanctified shall never be condemned. Rev. xx. 6. "*Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection, on such the second death hath no power.*" Sanctification doth not carry in it such a direct and intrinsic opposition to condemnation as justification doth, nor is it any meritorious ground of

non-condemnation. Yet where there is sanctification there shall be no condemnation ; for upon this, the power and dominion of sin is taken away ; vigorous resistance is made against it ; the bent of the heart is for God ; there is the participation of the divine nature ; the image of God is renewed in the soul, the believer in Christ is in part restored to that original rectitude which he had before the fall ; from all which the sanctified person is secured from condemnation. The Lord hath such a love and regard for his grace, that none shall perish eternally who have it.— Grace merits nothing ; yet it is a security from the greatest evil. Nothing can save where grace is not, and nothing can condemn where grace is ; so that believers in Christ being justified and sanctified, are above the reach of condemnation. These are the two great pillars on which the *therefore*, in the text, is built.

3. Again, the text affords another ground of non-condemnation, and that lies in the object itself. “ There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” Why so ? Because they are in Christ Jesus. These words are not only descriptive of the persons to whom this inestimable privilege belongs, but they are argumentative, and contain a reason or proof of the things spoken of ; this expression intimates that indissoluble union that subsists between Christ and believers. Can there be condemnation where there is such an union ; Surely no ; for by this union believers have an interest in all that Christ hath done and suffered ; they have a right to the *all* of Christ ; his obedience, death, resurrection and ascension. Upon this the apostle triumphs most gloriously

gloriously in the 33 verse, "who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect?" There he seems to challenge all inferior accusers, and bids them to do their worst, he hangs out a flag of defiance to all who will attempt to condemn any who are in Christ; God himself will not condemn them, for he justifies. *It is God that justifieth*: and he cannot condemn and justify the same person, for he hath declared, that he hath accepted Christ's satisfaction made in behalf of the believer; and he will not be satisfied and yet condemn. Again, Christ will not condemn them, for his great design was to prevent condemnation. This was the very thing he had his eye upon in his great and blessed undertaking: Yea he is so far from doing it himself, that he will not suffer it to be done by any other. Sin shall not condemn any who are in Christ, for that is expiated by the blood of Christ, and pardoned by an offended God. It is condemned itself, and a condemned thing shall never be a condemning. Again the law cannot condemn such as are in Christ, for it is fulfilled by the surety, and so cannot be a proper judge. Besides, believers are not under the law, but under grace, and therefore cannot be condemned by a judge to whose jurisdiction they do not belong. From all which it is evident, that there is not, that there cannot be any condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.

To conclude, at present, pray that the Lord may enable you by the power of his grace to accept of Christ, as he is offered to you in the glorious gospel, that so you may be delivered from a state of condemnation, and brought into a state of peace and reconciliation with himself. *Amen.*

S E R M O N

II.

R O M A N S viii. i.

THERE IS THEREFORE NOW NO CONDEMNATION TO THEM
WHICH ARE IN CHRIST JESUS.—

WE have a memorable declaration of Paul the great apostle of the Gentiles, in the 3d chap, of the Phil. 8th and 9th verses, “*Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith;*” and says he, in writing to the Corinthians, “I determine to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified,” and this his excellent purpose, he more fully opens up in the 10th verse of the fore-cited 3d of the Phil. “that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings being made conformable to his death.” These indeed are the sum of christianity. That Jesus was delivered for our offences and raised again for
our

our justification. Our Lord Christ, as surety for the elect, was in their room, laid under the arrest of death to expiate their sins, and having by his sufferings given full satisfaction, he arose again, and they thereby obtain deliverance from the hands of the great judge. For, as his death is their payment in full satisfaction for all the demands that the law of God could make upon them, so his resurrection is their discharge, and a publication of it to the world. The apostle's conversion was so strange and wonderful, and the grace of Christ manifested in it, that from the peculiar impression he thence received, it is observable, that he delights to speak of nothing more, than union to Christ. By this he measures his own felicity, and the felicity of those whom he loves in the dearest manner. In 1 Cor. xv. 8. He speaks of himself, "as one born out of due time," because Christ was so late seen of him; and reckons it as the great honor, and advantage of others that they were sooner converted to Christ than he was himself; and that they were believers in him when he was a persecutor, and blasphemer; as if he should say, O happy beyond all expression are they who were sooner rescued from a state of condemnation, washed, justified, and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, than I was.

Having in the preceding discourse introduced myself to these words; I observed that they are a complete proposition, viz. That "there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus."

For method through divine assistance I propose in the

First

First place, to make a few preliminary observations.

Secondly, describe the nature of the privilege here asserted, viz. *deliverance from condemnation*.

Thirdly.—Inquire what it is to be in Christ Jesus; or, shew how persons may be said to be in Christ Jesus. And

Fourthly,—Make some practical improvement of the subject.

We have already gone through the two first general heads in the method, and shall now proceed to the consideration of the

Third, which was to enquire what it is to be in Christ Jesus? In general, to be in Christ Jesus, means that union that is between Christ and believers, through the spirit and faith. To be in Christ, is to be ingrafted, incorporated, and united to him. In fine, it is the same as to be a real christian. Some are in Christ only externally; they enter into his church by baptism, and partake of the ordinances of his institution, together with his people. They bear his name, and make a visible profession of belonging to him; of whom our Lord speaks, when he says, of his father's dealing with his followers, "every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away;" and again, "if a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch," as what appeared, or, for a time was taken by men to be so; but was not so in truth, nor accounted as such by the searcher of hearts. Thus when the apostle mentions his being known to the churches of Judea, he adds, "which were in Christ;" which may be understood of the body of professing christians there, as distinguished from the Jews. They

They were said to be in Christ, as owning themselves to be his followers, although there might be many unsound professors among them, and although under a profession of Christ, had no saving interest in him. "They are not all Israel who are of Israel." There are tares as well as wheat in Christ's field here below. Foolish as well as wise virgins in Christ's house.—Goats as well as sheep in Christ's fold' here on earth. Neither faith nor repentance are meritorious conditions of a person entering into the covenant of grace; they are some of the blessings contained in the covenant. They do not bring a person into it, but are the fruits and evidences of his being there. But that which brings a person into God's covenant is, an act of free, rich, and sovereign grace from all eternity. All that are savingly interested in God's covenant of rich and free mercy, were chosen in Christ from everlasting. Ephe. i. 4. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." The spirit of God doth, at conversion, take and apply this covenant of grace for the quickening, pardoning, justifying, and sanctifying of them. He shews them his covenant, brings them into it, and manifests to them their interest in it; but this is only the privilege of true believers.

Some are also in Christ by vital union, and so in the language of scripture are "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones; and he that is joined to the Lord, is said to be "one spirit" with him: and this is the being in Christ which is here meant, which is peculiar to believers, and none else. Concerning whom, he says that "they dwell in him, and he in them."

Now

Now the union that subsists between Christ and the believer, is variously expressed in the holy scriptures. It is sometimes expressed by believers being in Christ as in the text, and many places of scripture, as in 1 John, v. 20, "*And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ.*" 2 Cor. v. 17, "*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away, behold all things are become new.*" 1 Cor. i. 30. "*But of him are ye in Christ Jesus; who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.*" This union is also expressed by Christ being in believers, as in 2 Cor. xiii. 5. "*Examine yourselves, &c. Know ye not yourselves, how that Jesus Christ is in you except ye be reprobates.*" Col. i. 17, "*To whom God would make known, what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is, Christ in you the hope of Glory.*" And Rom. viii. 10. "*And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness.*" This union is also represented by believers abiding in Christ, and Christ abiding in them, as in Jo. xv. 4. "*Abide in me and I in you, as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me.*" 1 John, iii. 24. "*And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the spirit which he hath given us.*" This union is also described by Christ living in them, as in Gal. ii. 20. "*Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who*
loved

loved me and gave himself for me." We judge it altogether needless to spend more time in proving this point, viz. That some persons are in Christ, or that there is a blessed union between Christ and believers. All that we intend at present is, to endeavour in some measure to open up this fundamental point. Indeed, my brethren, it is very profound. It is a mystery, a very great mystery, a mystery that believers shall never fully understand till they come to heaven. John xiv. 29. "At that day ye shall know that I am in my father, and you in me, and I in you." That day refers to the time when the spirit should be given, that is promised in the 16th and 17th verses of this Chap. then the disciples began to have a fuller knowledge of Christ's being in the father, and of the father being in him, of their being in Christ, and he being in them, than ever they had before, and that knowledge will be perfected in heaven. Now as it was with the apostles, so it is with all believers, in their measure under the teaching of the same holy spirit; by these they know in part, hereafter they "shall know even as they are known." Our Lord Jesus Christ takes hold of their souls by his quickening spirit, renewing and sanctifying them, and begetting faith in them, by which they receive him, and consent to be his; saying, "thine we are, O David, and on thy side, thou Son of Jesse." Thus by the spirit on Christ's part, and faith on theirs, the blessed union is made up, by which they are said to "be in him, that is true," even in Christ Jesus, partakers of a divine nature, from the introduction of which, both he that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are

are all one. Now in order to the better understanding of this union that subsists between Christ and believers: we may 1st. mention some of the scriptural resemblances by which it is described, and 2dly. mention a few of its excellent qualities.

1. Then, we shall mention a few of the scriptural resemblances, by which it is described; and the

1st. Is that of a husband and wife. The conjugal relation is a very near union. If we look into the first institution of marriage, we shall find a deep foundation of oneness laid there, as in Gen. ii. 23, 24. "And Adam said this is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh, she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man." "Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and they shall be one flesh." Now Christ and believers stand in the same conjugal relation to each other. He is their husband, they are his spouse. They are espoused to Christ the one husband. "Thy Maker is thine husband, the Lord of hosts is his name, the God of all the earth shall he be called." Their name is Hephzibah and Beulah. Isa. lxii. 4, 5. "Thou shalt no more be termed, forsaken, neither shall thy land any more be termed desolate; but thou shalt be called Hephzibah, and thy land Beulah, for the Lord delighteth in thee; and thy land shall be married; for as a young man marryeth a virgin, so shall thy sons marry thee, and as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." The apostle asserts the marriage union between Christ and believers in the fulness of it, in Eph. v. 28, 29, 30, 31. "So ought

ought men to love their wives, as their own bodies, he that loveth his wife, loveth himself, for no man ever yet hated his own flesh, but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church; for we are members of his body, of his flesh and of his bones; for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh." Well, what of all this? the apostle adds,

"This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church." As if he had said, do not mistake me although I have spoken much concerning that union, that is between the husband and wife, according to its primitive institution; yet that is not the principal thing that I aim at: I have a higher union in view than that, viz. that spiritual union that is between Christ and the Church. For as the husband and wife are one, Christ and believers are much more so. The

Second resemblance is, that of the head and members. In the body natural, there is a near and close union; for they being joined together, make up one and the same body. Now Christ and the believer stand in the same relation to each other in the body mystical. He is the head, they are the several members belonging to that head. Col. i. 18. "He is the head of the body, the church." God hath given him to be head over all things unto the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."—It hath pleased the father, that in him should all fullness dwell. All grace is in him. There is justifying and pardoning grace, sanctifying and adopting grace in him. There is every thing in him that is sufficient for enriching sinners in time, and through eternal ages; and he distributes

butes his grace as freely as the sun scatters his beams through the world; and invites all the sons of men to come and share of his goodness. As in Isa. lv. 1. "Ho every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, bye and eat; yea, come, bye wine and milk without money and without price."

And in Rev. xxii. 17. "The spirit and the bride say come, and let him that heareth say, come, and let him that is athirst come, and who soever will, let him take the water of life freely."

"Now believers are the body of Christ, and members in particular." 1 Cor. xii. 27. For as truly and nearly as the head and members are united together, so truly is Christ and believers.

3dly. Another resemblance is, that of the root and branches, There is also union here. If it were not so, how could the one convey life, sap and nourishment to the other; Just so it is with Christ and believers. He is the root, they are the branches; As in John xv. 5. "I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me you can do nothing." We read also of being planted and ingrafted into Christ. This is a metaphor in which the spirit of God takes much delight when describing the mystical meaning between Christ and believers. As in Rom. vi. 5. "For if we have been planted together, in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." We read also of being rooted in Christ. There is a blessed resemblance between Christ and believers, and the root and the branches, in point of union, and in point of influence. The root is united to the branches, and they to it; so is Christ to the believer,

believer, and he to him. The root conveys sap to the branches, by which they live and are nourished; so does Christ to the believer. It is from him that all the believer's fruitfulness is derived. Their grace and all the flourishing of it, is not owing to their own care and industry in the usual means, though these are conscientiously attended to; but to the power and grace of the spirit of God, "which worketh in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure. For of themselves they can do nothing, "without me," says our Lord, (or, separate from me,) "ye can do nothing."

4ly. Another resemblance is that, between the foundation and the building. There is also union here; for in a building all the stones and timbers being joined, and fastened together upon the foundation, make up one entire structure: just so it is here. Believers are God's building; and Christ is the foundation of that building.—Eph. ii. 20, 21, 22. "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth into an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together, for an habitation of God through the spirit." These words may be read as a command,—*Be ye built up a spiritual house*; for as a man builds upon the foundation, and lays the whole stress of the building upon it, so the believer builds all his faith, hope and confidence, upon that sure foundation that Jehovah, the eternal father, hath laid in Sion. "Behold, says he, I lay in Sion, for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation, he that believeth shall not make haste." And

whoever have built upon him, they have been determined by the power of omnipotent grace, to commit the salvation of their precious and immortal souls into his hand. "The promise is still sure.—" *He that believeth in him shall not be confounded.*" Our Lord Jesus Christ is the only, as well as the all-sufficient Saviour. There is no need for any other. Nor is there any need for him dying over again; "*for by one offering he hath for ever perfected them that are sanctified.*" All who are now in heaven were justified, and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus. And all must be so who expect to follow. And we are assured that, "*he is able to save to the uttermost, all that come to God through him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.*" He is not a reed, but a rock of salvation. A strong redeemer, as the scripture declares. "*Their Redeemer is mighty, the Lord of Hosts is his name, the God of all the earth shall be called.*"

5ly. Another resemblance is that of meat.—That which a man feeds upon and digests, is united and incorporated with himself. Thus it is turned into his own substance, and made a part of himself. So the believing soul feeds upon Christ, digests him, as it were, turns him into his own substance; so that Christ becomes one with him, and he with Christ. John vi. 55, 56. "For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me, and I in him." Now, all this must be taken not in a literal but in a metaphorical sense. The eating and drinking here, is believing; for so it is to be understood all along in this chapter. Upon which believing the union follows. Our Lord Jesus Christ is

wholesome

wholſome and ſubſtantial food for the ſoul. This food quickens dead finners, and nourishes living ſaints; and for all the vaſt multitudes that participate of this food, yet there is no want. Here is milk for babes, and meat for ſtrong men. This food is ſweeter than honey or the honey comb, to which Chriſt makes finners of Adam's family welcome. "*Eat, O friends, (ſays he,) drink, yea drink abundantly, O beloved.*" My dear brethren, let me aſk you, have you ever as yet "*tasted that the Lord is gracious?*" Sure am I, if you have ever experienced this goodneſs mani- feſted to your ſouls, you will be deſirous of enjoying more and more of it; and ready to ſay, with thoſe in another caſe, "*evermore give us this bread.*"

We ſhall now mention a few of the excellent properties of that union which exiſts between Chriſt and believers.

1ſt. It is a moſt honourable union. No title among men is comparable to that of being a member of Chriſt. This honour have all his ſaints. "*Since thou waſt precious in my ſight, thou haſt been honourable, and I have loved thee; therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life.*" This cannot be ſaid even of angels themſelves. Angels are ſubject to him, and are his willing ſervants; but are not ſtiled his body, as the church is. "Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt took not on him the nature of angels, but the ſeed of Abraham;" and he ſtands in a peculiar relation to believers, as redeemed from among men, and miſtically united to him, "*ſo that he is not aſhamed to call them brethren; for he had prepared for them a city.*" And in this city, "*eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man*

to conceive what things the Lord hath prepared for them that love him."

2ly. It is a most enriching union. It is that which brings the person into a participation of Christ, as to all the blessings of his purchase.—The riches of Christ are unsearchable. "*Riches and honour are with him, yea durable riches and righteousness.*" He causeth them that love him, "*to inherit substance.*" And he hath promised "*to fill all their treasures.*" He is said to be full of grace and truth. Grace comes from him; and rivers of grace flow from his throne. Rev. xx. 1. "*And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and the Lamb.*" He is the heir of all things; and he makes his people heirs of God, and joint heirs with himself. "*All things are yours, (says the apostle) whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's,* 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. Again,

3dly, It is a most comfortable union. Nothing can be wanting to their support who are taken into it. They shall get *grace here and glory hereafter.* Every thing that the Lord hath seen needful for his glory and their good shall be bestowed. "*He is a son and a shield, he will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.*" Indeed it is common for them who are in Christ, to have a large share of affliction. "*I will leave in the midst of you a poor and afflicted people, and they shall trust in the name of the Lord, and stay themselves on their God.*" Sometimes the believer hath the powers of this world to contend with, especially if their commands interfere with the commands of God; as was the

case with Daniel, the apostles, and the three children; and in this case they may lay their account to meet with rage and violence; for Satan being the God of this world, hath, by permission, both the things and persons of it under his power. He pretends to be sole master of it; as we see in the attack he made upon the Son of God, in the wilderness. "All these things (says he) will I give unto thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me." It is just and reasonable that the *servant be as his master*. Well but amidst all this he hath said, "*in me you shall have peace*;" and when they come to encounter with the swellings of Jordan, he stands by them, and bears up their head, that so they may not sink below the stream. The believer is put in this case to say, "*O Death where is thy sting! O grave where is thy victory! thanks be unto God who hath given me the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ*." Therefore an interest in him who is God's salvation, may alleviate all his people's afflictions, sweeten every mercy, add a favour to what they enjoy, and calm their spirits under the most afflicting dispensations they possibly can meet with while here in a present evil world. However matters may be with the believer, he has sufficient comfort and consolation, when he is able to say, "*my beloved is mine and I am his*." I belong to him; am incorporated with him, and he who is my head, influences and governs the world, is perfectly acquainted with my condition, and able to save me from every thing that is hurtful to me, and knows what is the fittest season to do so, and will be sure to remember me when that season comes. And in the mean time, *his grace is sufficient for me*. What consolation may spring up in the soul from such thoughts as these! Again,

4thly. It is a sublime union, and that, first, in respect to its nature, as considered in itself, Christ and a poor sinner of Adam's family made one ! O what an union is this ! We have many unions in nature, and some very considerable ; but they all come short, and are but low in comparison of this : Next to the union of the three persons in the ever blessed and adorable trinity, and the hypostatical union of the two natures of Christ, the mystical union is the most noble.—Secondly, it is sublime in respect of its cause. The more supernatural a thing is, the more sublime it is. Now this union is entirely supernatural. What can nature be imagined to do for the bringing about of such a thing as this ? Surely it is all owing to the supernatural grace of God ; “ Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.” 1 Cor. i. 30.

5thly. It is a real union ; not a nominal or fanciful thing. It is as great a reality, as any thing can be. It is often spoken of in scripture under a variety of ideas, and all of them point it out with the greatest certainty ; for as really as the members are united to the head, and the head to the members ; the wife to the husband, and the husband to the wife ; the branches to the root, and the root to the branches ; so really are believers united to Christ, and Christ to them. Nothing in religion is real if this is not. Take away this oneness, and you take away all. Is not the union between God the Father, and God the Son, a real union ? Surely none will deny this. Well this is as real, John xvii. 22. “ And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one.” Observe

it is "*one, as we are one*;" but how? not as to any equality, but only as to verity. Believers are not one with Christ, as he is one with the Father, in respect to the manner of the union; but only as to the truth and reality of it. It is a higher union between the Father and Son, but it is as real an union between Christ and believers.

6ly. It is a spiritual union, not a corporeal union, but a divine, inward, and spiritual union. It is the uniting of hearts together in an imperceptible way. And the bonds of this union are spiritual, namely, the spirit on Christ's part, and faith on the believers. "He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." When our Lord had been speaking so much of it under the resemblance of eating and drinking, he adds, "It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing, the words that I speak unto you they are spirit and they are life." As if our Lord had said, you must not imagine that I intend any fleshly or corporeal eating; I only mean spiritual eating and drinking by faith.

7ly. It is a near and intimate union. The persons here concerned, are not only simply united to each other, but nearly and intimately. This union is so near, that we know not how to conceive of it, far less how to express it; we may borrow some light here and there from the scattered unions of nature to illustrate it, but in point of nearness they all fall short. Believers are not only *flesh of Christ's flesh, and bone of his bone*, but they are *one spirit with him*. Again, they are so near to Christ, that they may be said to be a part of him, nay, such a part of him that he, as head and mediator, without them could not be complete; for, as thus considered, they are his full-

ness. Eph. i. 23. "The fullness of him that filleth all in all." Again, this union is so near, that they have both one and the same name.—Christ's name and title is given to them, as in 1 Cor, xii. 12. "For as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many are one body; so also is Christ." The apostle there also mentions Christ mystically, not Christ personally, compare Jer. xxxiii. 6. "And this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS," with Jer. xxxiii. 16. "And this is the name wherewith she shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." The wife, upon her marriage union, loses her own name, and is called by her husband's; just so it is here. He, that is Christ, shall be called *The Lord our Righteousness*; and she, that is the Church, shall likewise be called *The Lord our Righteousness*. Here are such a communication of names as shews, that though Christ and believers are not one substantially, yet they are one really.

8ly, and lastly. It is an indissolvable union. Christ and the believer are so firmly joined together, that none shall ever be able to separate them; not all the powers of hell, with all their united strength, shall ever be able to disjoin or separate one soul from Christ. And herein lies a particular and transcendent blessedness of that union above all others among men, for these may all cease. The members may be separated from the head, and the head from the members; the tender husband may be separated from his loving wife. The superstructure may be broken off from the foundation. The soul may be separated from the body; but the mystical union

stands

stands fast for ever. Christ and a gracious soul can never be separated. God hath joined them together; and what he hath joined together *no man shall ever put asunder*. There are two abiding things with the saints, their unction, and their union. Their unction abides. *The anointing which you have received from him, abideth in you*, as in 1 John ii. 27. and their union also abides, for it follows, "*and ye shall abide in him.*" In the close of the viiith chapter of the Rom. the apostle gives a challenge to his adversaries, "Who shall separate us from the love of God? He informs us, none shall be able to do it,—So, who shall separate believers from their union with Christ? None shall, none can. Possibly the effects of it may for some time be suspended, but the union itself neither is, nor can be dissolved. As in the hypostatical union, there was for a time, a suspending of the comfortable influences of the divine nature from the human, in so much that our Lord cried out, "My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me!" Yet, notwithstanding all this, the union between these two natures was not in the least dissolved; so in the mystical union, the effects of it may sometimes be restrained, but the union itself remains firm and inviolable. Death itself, altho' it be the bane of all other unions, shall never put a period to this. May the Lord God grant, that his good spirit may bless this discourse, by making it a mean of uniting sinners to Jesus Christ. And if you be now united, O may you find the bond of union growing stronger and stronger every day, until death perfect it; and heaven continue it in endless glory. *Amen.*

S E R M O N

III.

R O M A N S viii. 1.

THERE IS THEREFORE NOW NO CONDEMNATION TO THEM
WHICH ARE IN CHRIST JESUS.—

IF we search the holy scriptures we shall find
that they speak of a three-fold union.

1. the union of three persons in one nature.
2. The union of two natures in one person.
3. The union of persons, where both persons
and natures are distinct.

1. There is the union of three persons in one nature. This is the Trinity, where we have three persons united in the Godhead. The trinity in unity, and the unity in trinity. One in three in respect of nature, and three in one in respect of personality. This is that ineffable, incomprehensible union which is between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in the same common nature of the Godhead, of which the apostle speaks, 1. John v. 7. "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one." This is a mystery to be
admired,

admired, not to be fathomed. A mystery too deep for the plummet of reason to reach; and that person who would go about by reason to comprehend it, is as foolish as he who would attempt to put the ocean in a bucket:

2. There is the union of two natures in one person. This is called, by divines, the hypostatical union, or the union of the two natures of Christ, both making up but one person. We may thus conceive of it: it is the substantial, supernatural conjunction of the two natures in Christ; the divine assuming the human, and giving it such a subsistence in itself, as that both make up one person, and yet so as the being and properties of both natures are preserved entire.

3. There is the union of persons; where yet persons and natures are distinct; and this is the mystical union that is between Christ and believers. And after all you have heard concerning it, in the preceding discourse, in order that you may not mistake the nature of it, be concerned, my dear brethern, to remember that there is union but no transmutation. Here is the union of persons, but not a personal union.

1. Here is union but no transmutation. Believers are united to Christ, but yet not so as that they are changed, or transformed into the essence or being of Christ, so as to be christed with Christ, as some too boldly speak; or that he, viz. Christ, is changed or transformed into the essence, or being of believers. No; we are not to entertain such a thought as this; for Christ is Christ still; and believers are but creatures still, notwithstanding of this union. Although they be nearly and really united, yet both keep their natures distinct, and are the same after this union,

as they were before it. As it is in the persons of the ever blessed and adorable trinity, there is union but no confusion. They are essentially one, yet they have their personal properties, and distinct subsistences. As it is in the two natures of Christ, they are in a near union, they make up but one person; yet for all this they are distinct. The godhead is not turned into the manhood; nor the manhood into the godhead. They are united, but neither transformed nor confused.— We may take a lower resemblance of it. In man there is a near union between soul and body; and they, united together, make up the man: yet, upon this union, the soul is not turned into the body, nor the body into the nature of the soul. They are not confounded, although united. They still retain their essence and properties distinct. The soul is the soul still, and the body is the body still. Just so it is in the union between Christ and believers.

2. There is the union of persons, but not a personal union. And there lies the difference between the mystical union, and the hypostatical union. The hypostatical union is personal, but not of persons; and the reason of this is, because in Christ there are two natures, but there is but one person. There is this nature, and that nature in Christ, but not this person and that person, as some erroneously affirm. Our Lord Jesus Christ did not assume the person of man, but the nature of man into his person. But in the mystical union it is otherwise. Here is the union of persons, but not a personal union. We say in the mystical union, there is the union of persons. The person of Christ is united to the person of the believer, and the person of the believer is united to the person

person of Christ. In the marriage union it is person joined to person. So it is also in the mystical union. Now, if it should be asked how a believer may be said to be in Christ? We answer, it cannot so properly be said that he is in the graces, comforts, or in the gifts of Christ, as that he is in Christ himself. So that this is an union of persons, but we say the union is not personal, for then Christ and the believer would properly and physically make but one person.—And then it would be so many believers, so many Christs; and so the believer would have no subsistence but in Christ; as the human nature of Christ hath no subsistence, but what it hath in the godhead; and thus the believer would also have merit in what he did. Therefore we must conclude that, although there be an union of persons, yet it is not a personal union; and they, notwithstanding of this, remain distinct persons.—This, as I formerly observed is a mystery, a very great mystery. Look up to God that he may bless you with his spirit, which is the spirit of wisdom, and revelation in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, that so you may be lead into the secrets of the covenant, and a discovery of the mysteries of the kingdom.

Having formerly explained the words of the text, I observed that they were a complete proposition, viz. “That there is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.

For method, we propose, in the

First place, to make a few preliminary observations.

Secondly,—Describe the nature of the privilege here asserted, viz. *deliverance from condemnation.*

Thirdly,

Thirdly,—Enquire what it is to be in Christ Jesus; or, shew, how persons may be said to be in Christ.

Fourthly,—To make some practical improvement of the subject.

We have already gone through the doctrinal part, and shall now, through divine assistance, proceed to the last general head in the method, which was, the improvement; and this subject may be improved in the following order :

1st. In an use of information.

2d. Of trial and examination. And,

3ly. Of exhortation.

I. This subject may be improved in an use of information,

1st. Then, we may observe, that believers in Jesus Christ, have a complete security against the dreadful consequences of death, however they may be afraid of them while here. It is no unusual thing even for believers themselves to be afraid of death, and the displeasure of God, especially when they consider the power of indwelling sin, and how often they are put to the worse by it. Therefore it is no wonder that they cry out, with the apostle, “O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death!” Death, the king of terrors, sometimes looks with such an awful aspect, that the very thoughts of his approaching, is enough to overwhelm us with fear. The apostle informs us of some, who, “through fear of death, were all their life time subject to bondage.” Well then, how may a poor soul be delivered from the fear of death? Why, here is the antidote;—Christ has gone through the valley and shadow of death. He hath broken the strength, and pulled

pulled out the sting of that formidable and all conquering enemy, by his death and resurrection from the dead; he hath shewed that death is not the end of our course, but a passing into happy immortality. Hence he promises that whosoever believeth in him, *though he were dead, yet shall he live*; and again, he shall not be devoured of death and the grave, but *he will raise him up at the last day*; Christ has gone before us through death, and become the *first fruits of them that sleep*. Had Christ passed into heaven before he died, as Enock and Elias, we had wanted the great pledge of a future immortality; but Christ, as the captain of our salvation, suffered and died, and then entered into his glory; to assure us, that in this road we are to follow him where he is, *that we may behold his glory*, for says he, "*Father I will that these whom thou hast given me, may be with me, that where I am, there they may be also.*" So that the believer being delivered from a state of condemnation, has no reason to be afraid of death. It can do no real harm. It is a chariot sent from his father to carry him to the mansions of bliss, prepared for him by his elder brother, John xiv. 2.

2. Hence see that although every sin in itself deserves God's wrath and curse, and although believers be much harrassed, and often foiled by corruption, yet having now by faith fled into Christ, the city of refuge, and thereby being justified, they are delivered from the curse of the law, and the condemnatory sentence thereof, and put into a state of salvation, and absolute freedom from the penalty of the covenant of works, which before they lay under. "*For there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.*" They are

are now passed from death to life, and shall never see death, viz. eternal death. John v. 24. "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.*"

3. Hence see the misery of all who have not an interest in our Lord Jesus Christ. The cloud is not so bright towards Israel, but it is as dark towards the Egyptians. The text is not more full of comfort to believers, than it is of terror to unbelievers. Here is the very marrow and sweetness of the gospel for the one, and here is also the bitter gall and wormwood of the law for the other. *There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ.* What so sweet! so comfortable! well, but there is nothing but condemnation, to them who are not of Christ. What more dreadful! and lamentable! my brethern, are ye chistleless, graceless, unbelieving finners? do not deceive yourselves. This freedom from condemnation, belongs not to you. The apostle doth not say, *there is no condemnation*, and so breaks off; no, but that none might presumptuously apply this great blessing to themselves, to whom it doth not belong, he mentions these who are concerned in it, and they are only such as are *in Christ Jesus*.—My brethern, ye who are out of Christ, be assured, there is nothing but condemnation to you. You are condemned already in the sentence of the law, and it will not be long till you be solemnly condemned, by the sentence of the great judge, unless you believe in Christ Jesus, so many unbelievers, so many condemned persons. And if so it is nothing to you to be condemned! O what a dreadful word is condemnation. The very
thought

thought of it is enough to strike us with fear and trembling. Put all the distresses of a present evil world together, one condemnation would downweigh them all. O the woeful stupidity and security of sinners out of Christ ! the curse of God hangs over them, wherever they go ; and whatever they put their hands to. They are no better than condemned men ; and yet how merry, jovial, and unconcerned are they : what a sad spectacle is it to see a poor malefactor that is condemned by man, and to be executed in a few days, altogether unaffected with his situation, and spending that short time he hath to live, in eating, drinking, and making merry, with those who are under the same condemnation ? Ah sinners ! out of Christ, this is your state ! nay, yours is much worse for you are under a worse condemnation, even the condemnation of the great God, the judge of the quick and dead ; and that is to die eternally ; and yet how unmindful are you ; you please the flesh, take your fill of sinful pleasures, live a merry life, nothing troubles you. Now my dear brethren, if this is your character, I would advise you to take the few following things seriously into consideration.

1. That God himself will be your judge, and will pass the condemnatory sentence upon you. It is awful to be arraigned and condemned at the bar of man, but how much more terrible will it be, to be arraigned and condemned at the bar of God ? What a vast disproportion is there, between many of the crimes, the judge, the sentence, and the execution ! O sinners, when you stand before this judge in order to receive your sentence, will you not tremble ? The majesty, the omniscience, the omnipotence, and the righteousness of this

judge are sufficient, to strike us all with fear and dread. There is no standing before him, such is his majesty; no hiding any thing from him, such is his omniscience, no corrupting of him, such is his justice. What then will become of you, who are in your sins, and out of Christ? At the tribunal of this God you must be tried, and condemned; and is this all nothing to you? or because he will not immediately judge the world himself, but immediately by Christ *that man whom he hath ordained* to this office, do you therefore imagine that your danger is the less, or that your punishment will be the more supportable? Alas! on the contrary, will it not greatly increase the sinner's fear, that he must be judged, by him whom he hath so often despised and rejected? he must be his judge, whom he would not have to be his Saviour. And in what glory shall this judge appear, when the sinner shall stand before him? you know the state and solemnity of the bench, adds to the terror of the malefactor at the bar. Matt. xxv. 31. "*When the son of man shall come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory.*" To be tried, cast, and condemned by such a glorious judge, and in such a solemn manner, must indeed be terrible to sinners. Rom. vi. 15, 16, 17. *And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond-man, and every freeman hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, fall on us and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?*

2. Consider what this condemnation is. Those persons are fearless because they are thoughtless. If they would but seriously ponder the things of another world, it would be a mean of deterring them from the many sins that they are guilty of. Condemnation ! What is it ? Why, in few words, it is to be adjudged to eternal death.—Men condemn malefactors to die a temporal death ; but God, the supreme Judge, inflicts a greater penalty ; his sentence is to die eternally. He doth not condemn to a prison, to an ax, or the gallows, just to die, and so end the matter ; no, no. He sentences to eternal death. Thus eternity fills up the measure of the wicked's misery, and makes it run over. In heaven there is an eternity of joy ; and in hell an eternity of woe. To be miserable as long as God shall be blessed ; to be always dying, and yet always to live ; to be always drinking the bitter cup, and yet the cup still to continue full ; to lie under the curse and to see no end of it ; and when millions of millions of years are over, all is as it were to begin again ; and the poor sinner after all this time is past, is just where he was at first ; what tongue can express, what heart can conceive the greatness of this misery ; *It is everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. It is everlasting punishment ; it is everlasting fire, and the worm that never dies ; the blackness of darkness for ever !* O sinners out of Christ ! what are your sentiments of all this ? Are you able to bear it ? Alas ! “who among us can dwell with the devouring fire ?” “Who among us can dwell with everlasting burning ?” This makes the sinners in prison afraid, and fills hypocrites with fearfulness ; and will it not have the same effect on you,

who have not an interest in Christ, God's salvation ?

3. Consider, that the condemnatory sentence being once passed, it will be irreverfible and irrefiftable. There is no reverfing of it, for as the curfe is intolerable, fo the fentence is irreverfible. All the finners entreaties will avail nothing.—

The time was when he would not hear Chrift, and now Chrift will not hear him. The feafon of grace is now over ; once condemned, and ever condemned. There is neither appealing from the judge, nor repealing of the fentence. We fay it is alfo irrefiftable, for as foon as it is pafft Chrift will have his officers by him who will put it into execution. His guard and retinue of angels fhall be ready to receive his orders.— Thefe reapers fhall gather the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them. And who fhall be able to oppofe them ? The judge, among the Jews, was to fee the offender punifhed before his eyes ; fo Chrift will not only pafs fentence, but he will alfo witnefs the execution. “ *These mine enemies that would not that I fhould reign over them, bring them forth and flay them before me.*” When men condemn, God can fave ; but when God condemns, who can deliver ?

4. Consider, that the unbelieving finner will not only be condemned by God, but alfo by himfelf. Self-condemnation will accompany God's condemnation. And when the poor finner is on his trial, confcience will accufe him as well as the law, and condemn him as well as the judge.— And as foon as the judge fhall have paffed fentence, confcience will fall upon the guilty condemned perfon, and fay, is not this righteous ? Haft thou not procured all this to thyfelf ? Is not

this the fruit of thy sin? We read at the great day, there shall be the opening of the books, Rev. xx. xii. "*And I saw the dead small and great stand before God, and the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life, and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books according to their works.*"

These books are especially two; the book of scripture, and the book of conscience. As to the last, wicked men keep it shut as fast as possible they can while here; but at that day, God will open it to purpose, and sinners shall be obliged to look into it, and read over the sins of their lives written there in very legible characters.

Now, my dear brethren, be concerned to remember these things; for as sure as God is righteous, so sure are you to be condemned if you remain strangers to Christ, God's Salvation.

Well, but how many, great, and highly aggravated your sins, and provocations against God may be, yet beware of despairing. The God with whom we have to do is a merciful God.—

He declares, *that he hath no pleasure in the death of a sinner; turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die, O house of Israel! Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon; or, as it reads in the original, he will multiply to pardon.* There are a multitude of mercies with him

for the pardoning of the multitude of our transgressions. *He is rich in mercy.* The whole earth is full of it. It is great above the heavens, and extends to [all the ages of time, and runs over to a blessed eternity. O then, let sin be condemned in you, and by you. A condemnatory sentence

must either pass upon the sin, or upon the sinner; and is it not far better it should pass upon your sins by yourselves, than upon your persons by the offended judge? Beware then of living in the practice of any known sin, or in the neglect of any known duty; and pray that God's grace may be sufficient for you, that he may keep you from being tempted to sin, and support and deliver you when you are tempted. The

Second thing in the improvement was an use of trial and examination.

1. Then, are they, and they only, the persons to whom there is no condemnation, namely such as are in Christ Jesus; how nearly then, doth it concern every one to examine themselves whether they be in Christ Jesus? My brethren, apply it to yourselves; ask yourselves one by one, Am I in Christ Jesus? It is the unspeakable privilege of some to be in him.—Well, then, am I one of them? What is this mystical union to me, if I am not a partaker of it? You ought to be very inquisitive about it, for the great and comprehensive blessing in the text depends upon it. If you are not in Christ there is nothing but condemnation to you; and if you are in Christ, there is “*no condemnation*,” no not so much as one single condemnation to you. Be concerned then, with the greatest diligence and faithfulness, to examine yourselves about this, says the apostle, 2 Cor. xiii. 5. “Examine yourselves whether you be in the faith, prove your own selves, know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you except you be reprobates.”—Now, in order to assist you in this great enquiry, whether you have that union with Christ which will effectually secure you from this most dreadful
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demnation, let us first distinguish concerning it.

1. Then, union with Christ is either natural, or spiritual. There is a natural union with Christ consisting in oneness with him, in respect to one of his natures, for he having assumed the nature of man, and united it to the godhead, in consequence of this, wheresoever the nature of man is there is union with him in this respect. We have already opened up the spiritual union, that is brought about by the spirit and faith, upon which the person is not only one with Christ, in respect of his human nature, but he is one with him in a higher manner, as being also made a partaker of his *divine nature*, that is to say, in as far as the image of God is stamped upon him. Now to apply this distinction; the first of these unions is not sufficient to secure a person from condemnation, for then all would be saved; even the unregenerated have that very nature which Christ assumed: but is this enough to free a person from condemnation? Surely no. It is true this natural union is very precious, and the foundation of great joy and comfort to believers, when they remember, that Christ, their glorious Redeemer, hath matched with their nature, and is now wearing the same in heaven. He is bone of their bone, and flesh of their flesh. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same." Heb. ii. 14. "He took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham. The apostle speaks of it as a very great thing. He that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one. Therefore we say, this union is very comfortable to believers, but to others who

know nothing more than that Christ is man, and that he hath assumed their nature, what will this avail them? What is it though Christ took our flesh, if he doth not give us his spirit? What is it for him to be made like to us in our frail nature, if we be not made like to him in his holy image.

2. Union with Christ is either external and visible, or internal and invisible. The first lies in church membership, they enter into the church by baptism, they partake of the ordinances of Christ's appointment, together with his people. Of these our Lord speaks in John xv. 4. "*Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away.*" Here is the external union; for here is a branch that beareth no fruit; and yet it is in Christ: how is it then in him? it must be understood, in respect of external and spiritual profession, *and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it that it may bring forth more fruit.* Here is the internal and spiritual union, that which is by real implantation into Christ. Now the question you ought to be putting to yourselves, is, whether or not are you so in Christ, as to be ingrafted into him? for the former without the latter will be but of little value. It is indeed a great mercy to be a member of the visible church now, but this will not secure a person from condemnation. If it be only external union with Christ here, it will notwithstanding be eternal separation from him hereafter. These things being premised, the main question is, whether the union between Christ and you (my dear brethren) be external, or internal; and that you may in some measure be capable to give an answer to it, be exhorted in the first place, seriously to consider the double bond of the mystical union.

Second-

Secondly take a view of some trying scriptures, that lay down marks concerning it.

1. Then enquire whether you have the spirit, for that is the bond of this union on Christ's part. It is a fact beyond all dispute, that none can be a partaker of this union that are not partakers of the spirit of Christ. The great apostle of the Gentiles lays it down very expressly, *If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his*, viz. he is none of those who are savingly united to him, and the person who would desire to know, if he hath the spirit, must examine what he feels of the saving operations of the holy spirit on his soul, and these are various; such as, illumination: Hence he is called "*the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Christ*," Quickening:—hence he is called the spirit of life. He quickens dead sinners, and comforts living saints. Well then, what experience have you of his quickening and comforting influences? have you been quickened by him, when you were dead in trespasses and sins? Have you been comforted by him? Be assured, that his consolations are so strong, that they furnish the soul with ground of unspeakable joy in the darkest, and most cloudy day. Heb. iii. 17, 18. "Although the figtree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls; yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." The joy that arises to the soul from this is deep! *your heart shall ever live*. It is permanent, your joy no man taketh from you, yea, it such as cannot be fully expressed, "Whom having not seen ye love, in whom although now ye see him not, yet believing

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ing ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Another operation of the holy spirit is conviction. The promise is, he shall convince the world of sin. By doing this, he leads sinners to Christ the provided Saviour, and unto God by him, and carries on that design on earth, for which Christ died, and is now employed in heaven. By his powerful influence, the most stubborn and rebellious vessel of mercy is made willing to be the Lord's, and submit to his disposal saying, "Behold we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God;" and with Thomas, "my Lord, and my God." Again

2. Examine yourselves, as to the other bond of this union, viz. faith. Ask yourselves in secret, how the case stands with you, as to this most excellent grace? Say, is this precious grace wrought in me? Am I a sincere believer? Have I heartily closed with Christ, according to the offer that is made of him to me, in the glorious and everlasting gospel? Have I built all my hope, and trust, in him for time and eternity, who is the sure foundation laid in Sion? Have I that faith that is wrought by the almighty power of God, which purifies the heart, overcomes the world, and works by love? or have I only an historical, and temporary faith? My dear brethern, do not deceive yourselves. You may have both these, and yet not be savingly united to Christ. The devils themselves have the first; they believe and tremble. James ii. 29. "They believe that there is a God, and that Christ is the Son of God," as they themselves acknowledged, Matt. viii. 29. "And behold they cried out, saying, what have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God, art thou come hither to torment us before the time? Our Lord speaks

speaks concerning the second in the parable of the sower, Matt. xii. 21. " Yet hath he no root in himself, but dureth for a while, for when tribulation or persecution ariseth, because of the word by and by he is offended." The persons endued with this faith, may have some good purposes and desires, but they are soon overpowered by unmortified corruption, and the force of temptation; and when this is the case, they stumble, and fall off from all their former profession of religion. But the faith that unites to Christ, is a saving grace wrought in the soul, by the spirit of God, whereby the person receives Christ with particular application of him unto himself, as his prophet, priest, and king; and relies upon him, and his righteousness alone for justification and salvation. This faith assures us of the reality and worth of eternal and invisible things, and produces a satisfaction and assured confidence, that God will infallibly perform what he hath promised. The believer is as confident of them as if they were before his eyes, and in his actual possession. Heb. xi. 1. "*Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*" By this faith we are said to be justified. Rom. v. 1. A person is said to be justified by faith, not formally, as if it were his righteousness, or the meritorious cause of his justification before God; but only instrumentally and relatively, as it is the hand of the soul that apprehends and applies the righteousness and blood of Christ which only cleanseth from all sin, and renders the person acceptable to God. Thus I have given you a short description of that faith which is the bond of the mystical union on your part. I shall now mention a few trying scriptures. The
First

First is 2 Cor. v. 17. "*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old thing are passed away, behold all things are become new.*" What a glass is this for every one of us to see our faces in! The thing to be known is our being in Christ, and how may we attain to this knowledge? Why, by our being new creatures. The apostle sets it down indefinitely, in order he might reach every person. This new creature is one of the greatest riddles in christianity to those who are strangers to it. It is that new creation that the soul is the subject of in the work of conversion. A converted man is quite another person than he was before. Well then, let me ask you what acquaintance have you got with this new creature? Canst thou say as in the sight of God, it is not with me as it hath been? The time was when I was as blind and as ignorant a creature as ever lived, in the things of God, but now the Lord hath shined into me, so that I see what I never saw before. The time was when I could curse and swear, take God's name in vain, profane the sabbath, and so on. But I dare not for my soul live such a life now. The time was when sin and I agreed very well, but now my heart rises at it. I hate it, not only as it is ruining to my precious soul, but also as it dishonorable to God. The time was when my heart and affections were entirely set upon the world. I looked for no other happiness than what it could afford, neither did I desire any other; but now I count all things but loss for Christ; I see nothing but a God in Christ can be a sufficient portion to my precious and immortal soul. The

Second trying scripture which I shall mention is, Gal. v. 24. "*They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.*" This is indeed a very trying passage, and intimates this much——no crucifixion, no union with Christ. The crucified head will have crucified members. He that is planted into the person of Christ, *will be also planted into the likeness of his death*, O then, my brethren, is sin crucified in you? Did you ever set that upon the cross that brought the Son of God to the Cross? Be assured our Lord will not have a member of his to lie under a foreign power. The flesh shall not be the ruler, where Christ is the head; for where he brings about the union he will have the dominion. The text, likewise, speaks of the flesh, and informs us that they who are in Christ Jesus *do not walk after the flesh, but after the spirit*. Here is the characteristical mark of all who are in Christ; they live not a fleshly carnal life, but a divine, heavenly, spiritual life. My brethren, what, then, is your walking? It is the conversation that must discover the union. Seriously consider your course of life, and that will plainly inform you to what head you belong. Again,

3dly. Another trying scripture is, John xv. 2. "*Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away.*" Now some are in Christ, not by real union, but only by external profession, as I have before observed; others are in Christ in a saving and spiritual way; and for the finding out of which let me ask you, What fruit is it that you bring forth? are you in Christ so as to be fruitful? Then are you in Christ indeed. He will have no dead or barren branches in him, for that would reflect dishonour to the root.—All
who

who are savingly united to him, shall bring forth fruit, good fruit, and plenty of it,—“fruits meet for repentance.” The fruit is unto holiness, where the end is everlasting life. “Herein, (says Christ) is my father glorified that ye bring forth much fruit.”

I now come to the last thing in the improvement, which was an use of exhortation.

1. Then, to you who are in Christ Jesus, and so are secure from condemnation, be exhorted to be thankful unto God for this unspeakable blessing. Admire his love and grace.—What! *no condemnation!* not *one condemnation!*—ye who deserved millions of condemnations, yet not so much as one condemnation against you. Are you not ready to cry out with the Psalmist, and say, “*Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me be stirred up to magnify his holy name.*” Let, this, your dignified privilege be a great incentive to grateful obedience. Are you secured from condemnation!—what manner of persons should you be in all holy conversation? How should you differ from others here, who shall so widely differ from them hereafter?

2. You who are strangers to Christ, be exhorted to pray that the spirit of the living God may open your understandings to consider how dangerous your condition and situation is. Pray that his grace may be sufficient for you, to dispose your hearts to seek the knowledge of your interest in Christ, and enable you to wait until his love be shed abroad in your hearts, and then you will have reason to rejoice in God, in time and through eternity. And that this may be your happy experience, let us be earnest in prayer for it;

it; and may he who sitteth upon the throne of heaven hear and answer.

Look down in mercy, O thou Almighty and loving Saviour, upon us. Hearts are open, all desires known, and no secrets are hid from thee. Enable every one of us to form a right judgment of what we have heard; and do thou exert thy almighty power to convince those of their guilt and danger who are not in Christ Jesus. O be pleased to put it into their hearts to seek an interest in him. Teach them, O Lord, that there is no salvation in any other. Discover to them both the sin and danger of trusting to any other foundation, than that which thou hast laid in Sion. And seeing Jesus is to come to be glorified in his saints, and as we know not how near this awful event may be, O may it be our privilege to be found at his right hand, to hear the almighty judge pronounce us blessed, and to enter into the joy of our Lord: there to praise Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; three self-existent persons in one Jehovah. To whom be honour and glory, dominion and power, thanksgiving and praise, now, and for ever, and ever. *Amen.*

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